



August 26, 2004

Providence man is sentenced to eight years in federal prison for firearms offenses

A federal judge today sentenced **Leron Porter**, of Providence, to 97 months in federal prison for two federal firearms violations. Porter, a previously convicted felon, carried a handgun when he sold crack cocaine on North Main Street in Providence last November.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the sentence, which Chief U.S. District Court Judge Ernest C. Torres imposed today in U.S. District Court, Providence. In May, Porter, 23, of 102 Camp Street, pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm and using a firearm in connection with a drug-trafficking offense.

At the plea hearing in May, Assistant U.S. Attorney Terrence P. Donnelly said that, on November 3, 2003, Providence police detectives observed Porter make what appeared to be a drug transaction in the vicinity of North Main and 7th Streets. The detectives were at that location in connection with another investigation when they saw Porter make the transaction.

When detectives approached Porter and identified themselves, one of them reached for Porter and knocked a handgun out of his hand. Porter fled the scene in a car, which became stuck in traffic, and then fled on foot. He was arrested on the roof of a YMCA building a few blocks away. Porter later admitted selling about 1.5 grams of crack cocaine and to having the handgun – a .357 caliber revolver – on him when detectives approached him.

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Providence Police and the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives** investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Donnelly prosecuted it as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, the U.S. Attorney's Office, working with Providence Police, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, and other agencies, aggressively prosecutes federal firearms offenses in an effort to incarcerate those responsible for gun violence and deter others from committing gun crimes. Part of the initiative is a joint review of gun cases by state and federal prosecutors to determine where best to prosecute the cases. Since 2001, federal firearms prosecutions in Rhode Island have more than doubled and have resulted in lengthy prison terms for gun offenders.

-30-

Contact: 401-528-5224

E-mail: thomas.onnell@usdoj.gov